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## Services Planned for Wilbert Vander-Ploeg, 22-Year Metro Employee

(April. 4, 2008) Wilbert Vander-Ploeg, a Division 20 Red Line operator, has died from cancer. Vander-Ploeg was 54.

Vander-Ploeg began working for Metro in November 1986 as a part-time bus operator. In January 1988 he became a full-time bus operator. Vander-Ploeg's survivors include a brother and sister-in-law who work for Metro: William Vander-Ploeg, a Carson Division 18 bus operator, and Katherine Vander-Ploeg, a Green Line train operator.

A viewing for the Bellflower resident will be held Monday, April 7 from 4 to 8 p.m. at the White's Funeral Home, 9903 Flower Street, Bellflower, Calif., 90706.

A gravesite service will be held Tuesday, April 8, at 11 a.m. at Artesia Cemetary, 11142 East Artesia Blvd., Cerritos, Calif. 90703. Following the gravesite service, a memorial service will be held at El Dorado Park Community Church, 3655 North Norwalk Blvd., Long Beach, Calif., 90808.

Vander-Ploeg on Friday March 28th attended the Red Line Safety and Appreciation Award Ceremony where he was the honorary guest.

"He was really dedicated to the Red Line," said John Sanchez, rail transportation operations supervisor. "I would get together with him on Fridays, and we talked everyday. He told me, 'What more can I ask for? I've done everything I wanted to do.' "

Sanchez noted that Vander-Ploeg took medical leave approximately one month ago. "I talked to him up to the day before his passing," Sanchez recalled. "He was in good spirits all the time."

"I really learned a lot from him," Sanchez recalled, noting his friend's sense of humor. "He was a good friend. He was really a good guy."



**Wilbert Vander-Ploeg**

Photo: Operator of the Quarter, 2004